

Appl. No. 09/976,928
Amdt. Dated Jan. 19, 2005
Reply to Office Action Mailed October 19, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 9, 21 and 22 have been amended. Claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1-3 and 5-22 remain pending in the application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fukushima et al. (US Patent No. 5,799,289).

In response to this rejection, applicant has in effect incorporated the limitation of claim 4 into independent claim 1, in order to distinguish claim 1 from the prior art cited by Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that Fukushima et al. does not disclose the feature of ***reprocessing the purchase requisition if the purchase requisition exceeds the current budget balance of the said one department***. When the department posts the purchase requisition on a corresponding terminal unit, the host calculates a total cost of the articles listed in the purchase requisition and a budget balance of the department according to a history of expenses of the department. The host then compares the total cost with the budget balance. If the total cost is greater than the budget balance, the expense management system gives the user an exceed budget warning. The user must then reprocess the purchase requisition, such as by abandoning it or modifying it, ***in order to purchase certain most wanted items and still stay within budget*** (see paragraphs [0026], [0028] and [0004]).

Fukushima et al. recites that when a summed cost of previously ordered supplies exceeds the budget of the department or section, the collection processing unit sends an error message to a personal computer. Then, the personal computer displays the error message, and the routine is ended. Thus, it is prevented that a particular department or section places an order by exceeding its budget (see

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column 7, lines 33-40). Therefore, execution of an ordering process can be approved only when the summed cost is within the budget of the department. Otherwise, execution of the ordering process is rejected. In the case of rejection, the department or section does not have any means for modifying the order to be able to purchase certain most wanted items and still stay within the budget.

Therefore, the limitation of reprocessing the purchase requisition if the purchase requisition exceeds the current budget balance of the department renders the method of claim 1 different from and novel over Fukushima et al., and claim 1 should be in a condition of allowance.

Claims 2-3 and 5-8 include all the subject matter of amended independent claim 1, and incorporate respective additional subject matter therein. Thus, it is submitted that claims 2-3 and 5-8 are also allowable.

Regarding amended claim 9, the expense management system comprises a transaction process module for controlling purchase requisitions *including re-submitted purchase requisitions*, purchase activity and settlement of cost accounts. Regarding claim 18, the transaction process module further comprises a transaction process program for executing specific transactions. The specific transactions include management of purchase requisitions, purchases and budget (see paragraph [0019]). Management of purchase requisitions includes reprocessing a purchase requisition if the purchase requisition exceeds the current budget balance of the corresponding department (see paragraphs [0026] and [0028]). Applicant asserts that the functions implemented using the transaction process module demonstrate that the transaction process module renders the claimed system different from and novel over Fukushima et al. Therefore claim 9 and/or claim 18 should be allowable.

On the premise that amended independent claim 9 is allowable, it is noted that claims 10-21 include all the subject matter of claim 9, and incorporate respective

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additional subject matter thereinto. Thus, it is submitted that claims 10-21 are also allowable.

Claim 22 is also allowable for the similar reason with claims 1 and 9.

In view of the above claim amendments and remarks, the subject application is believed to be in a condition for allowance, and an action to such effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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